GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3022
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2001
LAW FOR GOVERNING PRINT/ELECTRONIC MEDIA
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Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the law governing print/electronic media;

(b) whether any action can be taken against print/electronic media for mis-reporting; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) The Print and Electronic Media are governed by the laws of land which include the following

- Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867
- Official Secrets Act, 1923
- Parliamentary Proceedings (Protection of Publication) Act,1977
- Press Council Act, 1978
- The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- Indian Telegraph Act, 1865
- Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990
- The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995

(b) and (c) : The Press Council of India (PCI) has been set up as a self regulatory body of the Press under the Press Council Act, 1978. As per Section 14 of the Act, the PCI may warn, admonish or censure the Newspaper, the News Agency, the Editor or the Journalist or disapprove the conduct of the Editor or the Journalist as the case may be, for offending the standards of journalistic ethics or public taste or for professional misconduct. No separate law has been enacted with reference to the electronic media. However, the programmes of All India Radio and Doordarshan are governed by policy guidelines/programme codes framed for the purpose.

The programmes of Satellite channels, when transmitted through cable networks, are required to adhere to the programme/advertisement code prescribed under Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994. Rule 6(1)(d) prohibits the carriage of any programme in the cable service which contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendoes and half truths. Enforcement of the provisions of the Act and Rules rests with the authorized officers i.e. DMs, SDMs, Commissioners of Police and other officers as may be notified by the Central/State Governments.